DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 451 082 SO 031 976

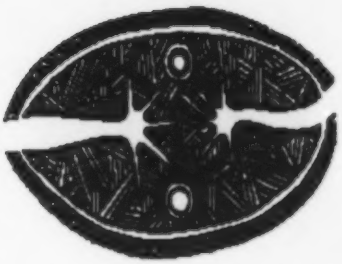
AUTHOR Lahiri, Dipak; Lindgren, Katarina
TITLE Learning by Urban Studies: A Project by Secondary School Students in Stockholm.
INSTITUTION Australian Inst. of Art Education, Melbourne.
PUB DATE 2000-00-00
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the World Congress of the International Society for Education through Art (InSEA) (30th, Brisbane, Australia, September 21-26, 1999). Funded by the Australia Council for the Arts.
AVAILABLE FROM Australian Institute of Art Education, Melbourne, C/Suite 125, 283 Glenhuntley Road, Eisternwick, VIC 3185, Australia.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Architecture; *Built Environment; *Educational Cooperation; Foreign Countries; Futures (of Society); Secondary Education; Secondary School Students; *Student Projects; Student Surveys; Urban Culture; *Urban Environment; *Urban Studies
IDENTIFIERS *Sweden (Stockholm)

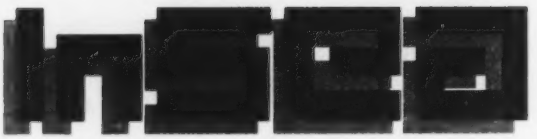
ABSTRACT

How is the next generation going to live within and use the city? This study of the urban environment provided students with opportunities to learn about the function of architecture and planning, to identify their beliefs and opinions, to consider a range of views, and ultimately to make informed and responsible choices concerning the built environment and community values. This paper is designed to assist teachers to integrate urban study concepts with daily lesson plans. Starting in Hagersten, a suburb south of Stockholm (Sweden), teaching resources are being developed and distributed via CD-ROM and the Internet; these resources will be used in schools from suburbs and cities as a cultural relay. By devising a cultural relay between schools and cities, students and teachers learn to appreciate and study the city. Students and teachers use the city as classroom and textbook, learning about buildings, green spaces, transportation networks, and influences from different cultures and periods. Teachers of social science, languages, arts, and music have all collaborated on the project. Contains illustrations. (BT)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 451 082





"Learning by Urban Studies: A Project by Secondary School Students in Stockholm"

by

Dipak Lahiri and Katarina Lindgren
Stockholm, Sweden

SO 031 976

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Boyd

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Proceedings from the InSEA 30th World Congress "Cultures and Transitions"

21-26 September 1999
Brisbane Australia

Copyright 2000 Australian Institute of Art Education
C/Suite 125, 283 Glenhuntley Road
Eisternwick VIC 3185

This project has been assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its art funding and advisory body.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Learning by urban studies:

a project by secondary school students of Stockholm.

Dipak Lahiri and Katarina Lindgren

Summary

How is the next generation going to live and use the city? This study of urban environment provides students with opportunities to learn about the function of architecture and planning, to identify their beliefs and opinions , consider a range of views, and ultimately make informed and responsible choices.

The educational resource , a result of this project, is designed to assist the teachers to integrate urban study concepts into their daily lesson plans. Starting in Hägersten, a suburb south of Stockholm, we are developing teaching resources and communicating them by use of CD-roms and the Internet. It will be used in schools from suburbs and cities as a cultural relay. The project will terminate at the end of 1999. The project is led by Fruängsskolan in collaboration with the Museum of Architecture and Riksbyggen, a national housing company.

A cultural relay

There is a growing concern about the state of urban environment, yet we are often confused by the complexities of various issues related to it. Integrating built environmental concepts within various subject areas promotes this change in attitude by providing students with opportunities to experience and investigate the relationships linking individuals, societies, and urban surroundings.The lifestyle of future citizens is a challenge.

To whom does the city belong?

Is the next generation prepared to live in a sustainable way?

Can we help them in any way?

By devising a cultural relay between schools and cities, the students and the teachers learn to appreciate and study the city. Hägersten, a typical 1950s suburb of Stockholm, has become cosmopolitan during the recent years. The inner core and the other parts of the city are included in the project. The project began in January 1998 and will continue throughout 1999.

Developing teaching resources

In the project students and teachers use the city as classroom textbooks. Our preliminary findings show ways to develop teaching aids and teamwork between teachers. During the InSEA conference we will be able to report the experiences from the final stage of the project with some illustrations, texts and recordings by the use of multimedia techniques.

We are now able to develop teaching aids including CD-rom and the Internet. The content is being discussed through lectures, city tours, schools and museum activities. Exchange of ideas and information is taking place between a few schools.

To learn and to create

We are able to develop enormous resources to train ourselves to coexist with nature and get rid of anti-environmental processes. Training at an early age enhances these possibilities of creating viable solutions for the future. With the ability to apprehend, observe, feel and listen the youth can strengthen the base for new solutions and thus discover and recreate their city. This study offers us an opportunity to realise the complexity that exists in social, economic, natural and historical processes of the city.

Curiosity and competence

In the project, the students develop their curiosity about buildings, green spaces and transportation networks as well as explore influences from different cultures and periods. The students now have a chance to learn outside the school and from people other than the teachers. The teachers are now able to develop their competence to inform and communicate with architects and professionals from councils, authorities, other schools and museums. They raise their standards through this crossdisciplinary approach. Students have participated in city tours and seminars led by an architect and a photographer. Teachers of social science, languages, arts and music have collaborated in working with the project.

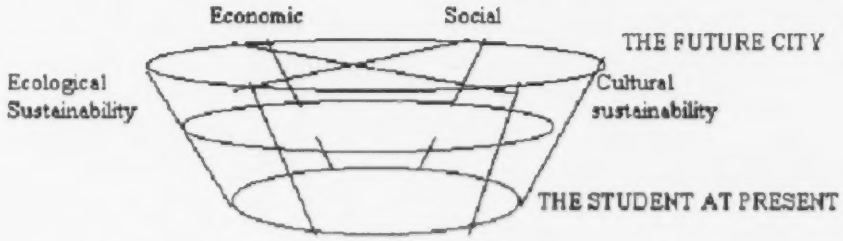
A number of teachers are now able to develop their terms of international reference by relating to different places and cultures.

Students and teachers participate

Participators are students between the age of 12 and 16 years, their teachers in Fruäng'sschool, two architects and a photographer. Students and adults work together in team and practice the language of the city and its messages by
exploring, observing, asking questions and using their school knowledge,
doing city tours and educational visits,
showing others their photographs, films, illustrations, measurements, models, texts and recordings,
collecting material from archives, museums and libraries.

Preliminary findings

The students use the neighbourhood and city as classrooms. So far they have:
studied landmarks and symbols
created their own illustrations of the built environment and its details,
started to communicate with architects and photographers,
developed an insight into the city's character through some of the senses.



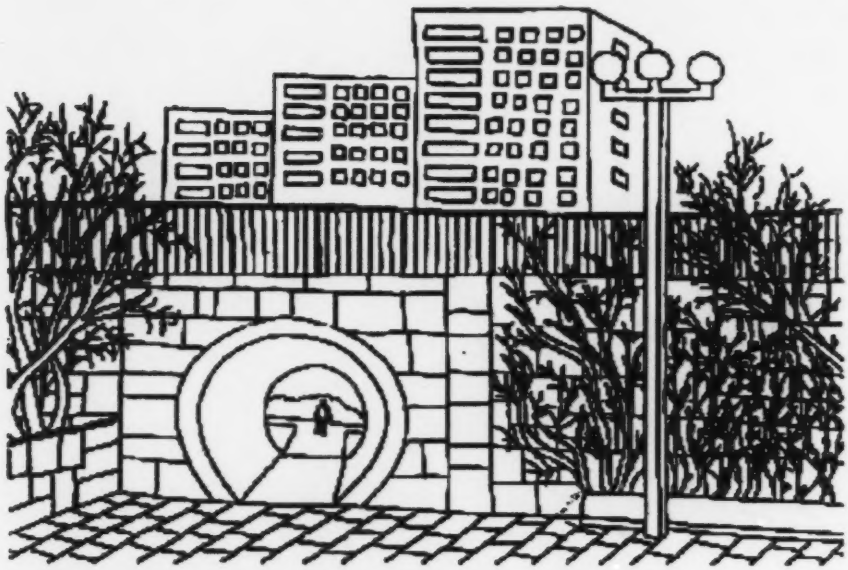
Social and consuming interests are dominating

What interests and what kind of knowledge is the younger generation going to develop?
Our experience reveals the insights that students mostly have their interests focused on friends, consumption and new media.

To create an interest in the different parts of the built environment.

Twentyfive students 13 years of age were asked questions about their house and neigbourhood in the suburb of Hägersten. The answers show that they are pleased to live in the area and go to Fruängsskolan. They say they have a good time and they hope that it could still be better.

What could be changed is mostly concerned with their possibilities for consumption and social interaction. Their measures are concerned with the school, the surroundings and the local center. They discussed about about built environment, mostly the schoolyard, the design of the buildings and the nature close to their homes.



Way to the school, by Daniel a 13 year old student.

Cultural and ecological interests

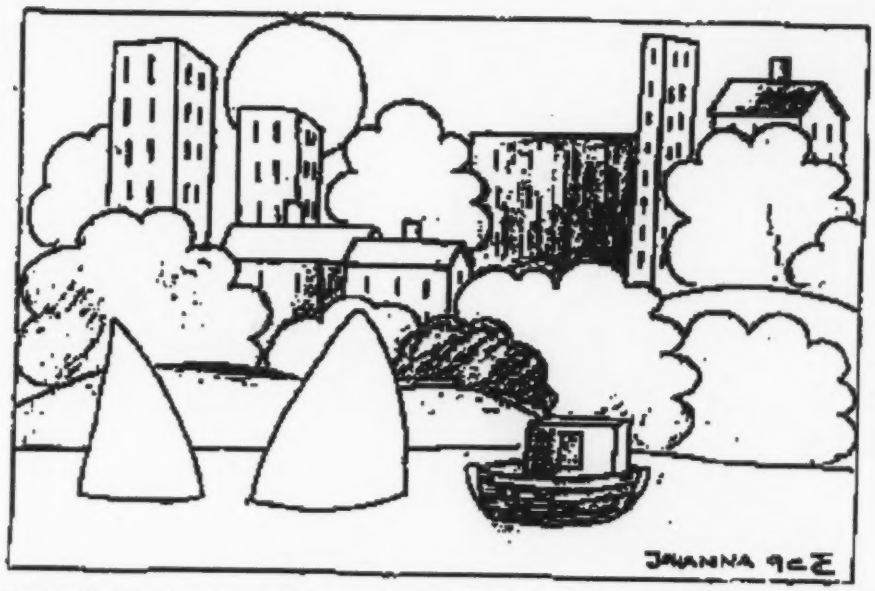
Most of the students are not used to notice the built and cultural environment. Learning by urban studies is a way of understanding built environments, and how humans are part of, and influence, their surroundings. It integrates concepts and principles of cultural and social ecology. It provides students with the opportunity to learn about their connections to the built environment through school subjects and direct experience.

When we study attributes such as aestetics, colour and material of walls, floors and other parts of the built environment, there are lots of things for the students to discover. These exercises helped them to discover what they have always looked at but never really "seen".

To create an interest in the city of Stockholm and its culture

Twentyfive 16 years old students have painted and described Stockholm as a capital city. They were told to present the features that illustrate the identity of Stockholm, for example the surrounding seascape, the green areas or the effective public transit. Once they have drawn the cityscape of Stockholm they should feel assured of their collective identity that the city offers.

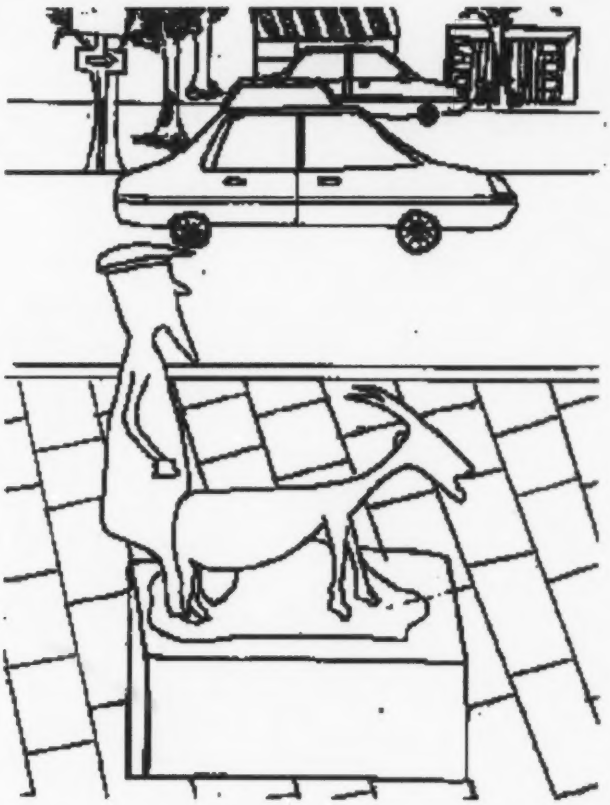
The result shows their focus on landmarks, but also on other symbols of the city. The most common landmarks shown in the drawings are the skyscrapers, the City Hall, and the Globe Arena. The underground railway, the green environment, the ships, water and bridges are quite common symbols chosen by the student to illustrate Stockholm. Other typical landmarks are the Kaknäs Tower and the church spires. The mix of higher and lower level buildings prevail. The common landmarks are the same ones you can see in tourist brochures. However the student drawings show a totality of the city that is rare in the tourist brohures. The results were exhibited at the Museum of Architecture in Stockholm.



My Stockholm is the city of suburbs. A city that almost extends to the counrtryside. The city is full of parks and green areas where the nature becomes intense. It is even a city of water, with sailingboats and canoes sailing through its many streams.

The mix of low and high level raise apartments, green environment and seascape of Stockholm, Johanna a 16 year old student.

The students state that their direct experience with the the built environment, both individually and in groups, has been important for their urban studies. The students have gained a deeper understanding of their surroundings and the impact the residents have on them.
This awareness helps students to develop an aesthetic appreciation of their residential envronment. An aesthetic appreciation, backed by a factual understanding of their built environment encourages them to learn and to protect and sustain the environment, and contributes to self-awareness and personal fulfilment.
The students express that the rehabilitation of the housing stock in Hägersten is desirable even though their architectural quality is not special. The local sculptural park with about 30 works of national and international art is noted. The students point out that the aesthetics of the built environment is sufficient to deserve preservation.



The sculptures owe much of their charm to the children that plays with them - in summer and in winter. Västertorp, sculptural park, which houses some of the finest collection of modern sculptures in Scandinavia, also has some interesting modern sculptures such as Allan Runefelt, Henry Moore and Asger Jorn. By Kim a 15 year old student

Teaching resources

The project shows possibilities that students at an early age can start studying city as a classroom. We have been able to create educational resources for use in schools and adult studycircles. These are:
A teachers folder
Questionnaires to use in schools
Leaflets and fact sheets
A plan of the area that maps students visions.

Our findings point out that:

The interaction between drawing and writing provides opportunities for artistic as well as verbal methods.
The questions have to be very clear and calrified with several examples.
We have to approach the questions about sustainable cities in many tiny steps.

During the last few years we at Fruängsskolan have acquired experiences in developing multimedial teaching resources. Different ways of combining the drawings, pictures, text and sound offers new opportunities for the project . This interactive process is affecting the teaching environment to a great extent.

A townsquare in Hägersten. By Marika, a 16 year old student

The next step

This term we have asked the students about the future of built environment in the city. At the conference we will be able to remark on their answers. In the autumn we will try the multimedial resources,a result of this project, to study the neighbourhood and city as classrooms.

The student and teachers will thenobserve and study from different periods of Hägersten and Stockholm get an insight into the city's character through all the five senses develop their capacity to communicate with new groups and through new media.The challenge would be to answer questions about the sustainable city like:

How are the next generation going to live and use the city?
What will be the type of consumption and production habits?
Are they going to engage themselves in their neighbourhood and regional activities?
Will they act globally?

If students are to act ecologically in the future this approach can offer great possibilities.

What students ages 15-16 think about the future

Assets: The students want to know more about access to material and natural resources. They inquire about the differences in family incomes and assets like car, summerhouse, boat and household equipment. They worry about clean air and water, healthy parks and forests.

Opportunities: The students compare employment and educational opportunities, ski holidays, weekend excursions, summer and winter vacations.

Access: The students worry about the economic differences, discrimination, segregation and sexual inequalities. They consider the human control over nature and other species to be unacceptable. They feel that the needs of single parents, particularly of working women with children are not met adequately.

Rights: The students find contradictions in the unspoiled nature, present access to recycling technology and the disposal of industrial and nuclear wastes in remote areas.

Generations: The students experience a generation gap in the attitude between the depletion and conservation of natural resources for the well being of future generations.

Implications

The existing view of neighbourhood conditions is based on the reports of 15 and 16 year old students in Fruängsskolan. We think that it is important to document the thoughts and feelings of the students about the built environment. Hägersten has its problem which are no better or worse than other districts of Stockholm.

They feel the lack of measures against theft, drug misuse and violence. The notice the absence of youth oriented public transport, car ownership among single female parents, cultural institutions, youth centers for organisational and after-school activities, computer pools,laundromats, repair workshops etc.

Fruängen shoppingcentre, 5 minutes walk from the school. Björn a 15 year old student.

The waterways are a perfect complement to the city, creating it's beauties on sunny days and floodlit nights . By Andreas a 15 year old student.

Learning by urban studies provides an opportunity to reconsider cultural assumptions and to solve social conflicts and to avoid environmental crises.The project has created new visions and possibilities, and and it has been important for students to understand that issues and crises are the result of our own values , and values of the community. A study supported by critical thinking tools

such as social analysis, arguments and discussions provides a means to assist with the decision-making process.

Dipak Lahiri, architect & arts teacher, Fruängsskolan, Fruängsgatan 61, SE-129 07 Hägersten
Tel:+46(0)8-6033360 Fax:+46(0)8-7087455 E-mail: dipak.lahiri@fruangenskola.stockholm.se
Katarina Lindgren, urban/environmental planner. Tel:+46(0)8-313333 E-mail:eken-ark@algonet.se